

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Canceled)

2. (Canceled)

3. (Canceled)

4. (Canceled)

5. (Canceled)

6. (Canceled)

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for carrying the spare tire for a vehicle, comprising

a tire support for mounting a spare tire having a rim with an interior opening and the tire support ~~includes~~ including

at least one lug for securing the tire to the tire support; and

material extending past the lug which supports the tire in a manner to permit the tire to rotate and be aligned with the lug, wherein the material provides stable support throughout at least a major portion of the interior opening in the rim.

10. (New) The apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the material is circular in nature and extends far enough around in circumference to meaningfully connect with the interior opening in the rim.

11. (New) The apparatus according to Claim 9, wherein the material provides contact and support at least at points distributed throughout at least a partial circumference of at least about 240°.

12. (New) The apparatus according to Claim 11, wherein the circumference of the material is extent at least about 240°.